Draft board generated proposals by Board member Mitchell

<u>**PROPOSAL XXX**</u>

5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.
Amend the *Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan* to allow fishing with set gillnet gear within 600 feet of the mean high tide mark in the Upper Subdistrict when sonar passage of large late-run Kenai River king salmon exceeds 13,500 fish, and Kenai and Kasilof river sockeye salmon escapement objectives are being met, as follows:

5 AAC 21.359. Kenai River Late-Run King Salmon Management Plan.

…

      (d) If the projected late-run king salmon escapement is less than 15,000 king salmon 75 cm mid eye to tail fork and longer, the department shall
          (1) close the sport fisheries in the Kenai River and in the salt waters of Cook Inlet north of the latitude of Bluff Point to the taking of king salmon;
          (2) close the commercial drift gillnet fishery in the Central District within one mile of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline north of the Kenai River and within one and one-half miles of the Kenai Peninsula shoreline south of the Kenai River; and
          (3) close the commercial set gillnet fishery in the Upper Subdistrict of the Central District**, except as provided in (e)(3)(H) of this chapter**.

…

(e)(3)(H) through December 31, 2022, if escapement of Kenai River late-run king salmon 75 cm mid-eye to tail fork and longer exceeds 13,500 fish and Kenai and Kasilof river sockeye salmon escapement objectives are being met, fishing with set gillnet gear may be allowed by emergency order within 600 feet of the mean high tide mark in the Upper Subdistrict. Commercial fishing opportunity under this provision will be structured to maximize harvest of surplus sockeye salmon and minimize harvest of king salmon, based on inseason analysis of ADF&G fish ticket, escapement, and other available information. The operation of set gillnets by a CFEC permit holder in these openings shall be restricted to one of the following:

    (i)   **up to four set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length, 105 fathoms in aggregate length, and 29 meshes in depth, or two set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth; set gillnets used that are not more than 29 meshes in depth must be identified at the end of the gillnet with an attached blue buoy that is not less than nine and one-half inches in diameter; or**
    (ii)   **up to two set gillnets that are each not more than 35 fathoms in length and 29 meshes in depth or one set gillnet that is not more than 35 fathoms in length and 45 meshes in depth; set gillnets used that are not more than 29 meshes in depth must be identified at the end of the gillnet with an attached blue buoy that is not less than nine and one-half inches in diameter.**

…

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Recent efforts to conserve Kenai River late-run king salmon and meet the Kenai River late-run king salmon optimal escapement goal of 15,000 large fish have resulted in foregone yield of Kenai River late-run and Kasilof River sockeye salmon. This proposal provides the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) an additional tool to harvest surplus sockeye salmon with set gillnet gear when Kenai River late-run large king salmon sonar passage exceeds 13,500 fish, which is the sustainable escapement goal for Kenai River large late-run king salmon established by the department, thereby assuring that a sustainable level of king salmon escapement is achieved while providing additional sockeye salmon harvest opportunity beyond what is currently allowed. In considering these emergency order openings the department will evaluate the number and size of king salmon harvested in the set gillnet fishery and manage conservatively to minimize king salmon harvest as well as the need to ensure provisions of other related management plans are being met. This will require careful coordination between the department, Alaska Wildlife Troopers, and fishery stakeholders.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Board of Fisheries
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